

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Mississippi church rises to challenge

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

McLaurin Heights Church, Pearl, is committed to missions, and demonstrates that commitment through giving to the Cooperative Program (CP).

Four years ago, the church decided to fashion a Challenge Budget similar to what the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) does. If there are more non-designated receipts that come into the church in a fiscal year than budget expenditures, then those excess funds are placed in the church's Challenge Budget. This past year, the church divided the Challenge Budget into three parts, one of which was the CP. The church already gives 12% of its non-designated gifts to the CP.

"Our church has three missionaries, not all of them International Mission Board missionaries, that our church supports," said pastor Steve Jackson. "One is in South America, one is in the New York City area, and one is in Guatemala. All of them are helped by the church - not out of the regular budget, but out of this Challenge Budget. This past year, we used the Challenge Budget to fund them - 33% went to these missionaries sent out from our church, 33% went to the Cooperative Program, and 33% went to our budget escrow account, which is our savings account."



GIVING GENEROUSLY — Rick Blythe (left), director, Stewardship/Cooperative Program Promotion, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, is shown receiving a "13th" check from McLaurin Heights pastor Steve Jackson for the Cooperative Program. (photo)

"Someone on our stewardship committee just said, 'This is why we have the Cooperative Program.' Even with a church our size, we'd have trouble supporting these missionaries," Jackson said, "but the Cooperative Program is strictly Baptist, and for us it's not an option. It's time tested, it's

proven, and those that handle the money are all above board. To me, all churches ought to tithe their proceeds, and for me the Cooperative Program is where it should go." McLaurin Heights chooses to give a bit more than a tithe.

*** CHALLENGE on p. 6

On the inside

For a look at your Cooperative Program gifts at work in Mississippi and around the world, turn to the CP insert at the center of the paper.

Page: CP best for Kingdom work

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee in Nashville, told Mississippi Baptists he is convinced that the Cooperative Program (CP) must be supported in SBC life because "it's the right thing to do."

Speaking at Cooperative Program luncheons at First Church, Laurel, on March 24, and at North Oxford Church in Oxford on March 25, Page said CP is the best way for churches to band together for advancement of Kingdom work and, "I know of no other way for a church to concurrently and consistently fulfill Acts 1:8."

Acts 1:8 in the Bible reads, "But you will receive power



when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

"It is clear what God wants," said Page, who served for nearly two years as interim pastor of First Church, Jackson. "There are billions who have yet to hear (the Gospel)."

"I understand that we're in a day and time when cooperative missions is often seen as an outdated modality. We've seen over-

all mission funding decline (but) we're trying to get the name of Jesus to every man, woman, boy, and girl on the face of the earth."

"That's what this is about. We have a mission. We need to be looking to Jesus. He is our goal."

"I encourage you today to do more than you've done before. Why? Because the need is greater than before."

For more information on the Cooperative Program, visit the Stewardship and Cooperative Program Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at mbcb.org, then click on Departments. Telephone: (601) 292-3347, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 347.

Additional information and resources can be obtained by visiting sbc.net.

Court upholds abortion ruling

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — A Texas law passed last summer that tightened the state's abortion regulations has been upheld by the federal Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The much-anticipated ruling from the three-judge panel in New Orleans was unanimous. In a Jan. 6 hearing, the tone of questions from the judges had hinted they were skeptical of arguments that the law placed an undue burden on women seeking abortions.

Last October, U.S. District Judge Lee Yeakel, a 2003 appointee of U.S. President George W. Bush, struck down two requirements in Texas House Bill 2: that abortion doctors have hospital privileges within 30 miles of their clinics, and that a physician be present to monitor administration of abortion-causing drugs such as mifepristone, commonly known as RU-486.

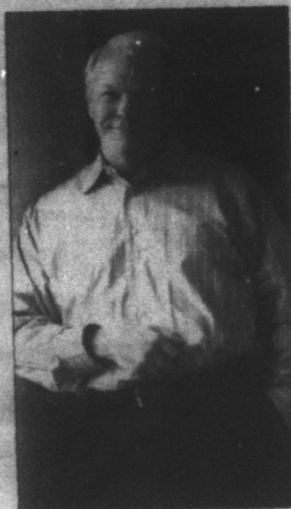
Yeakel ruled that the requirements placed an unconstitutional "substantial obstacle" to abortion.

The bill also outlawed abortions beyond 20 weeks post-fertilization.

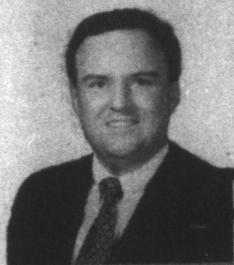
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PAGE



From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Principle's price

Brendan Eich is not a household name in this part of the country, but he could easily serve as a shining example of what this country is meant to be. Born in 1961 to a family of modest means in Pittsburgh, Eich worked hard, studied even harder, and earned bachelor and master's degrees in mathematics and computer technology.

After stellar performances at several high-tech companies in Silicon Valley, Eich landed at Netscape where, by the way, Jacksonian Jim Barksdale was chief executive officer.

While at Netscape, Eich created the wildly successful Javascript program that is still in wide use today, and he was heavily involved as lead technologist in the formation of Netscape's Mozilla Foundation, which developed the Firefox Internet search platform.

Eich worked his way up to chief technology officer after Netscape spun off Mozilla and it was renamed Mozilla Corporation. He continued to lead Mozilla through several major product breakthroughs as the company took its rightful place near the top of the technology world. In March of this year, his dream was realized when he was named Mozilla's chief executive officer. That's when the trouble started.

Back in 2008 in the state of California where Eich resides, Proposition 8 was moving toward a vote by the people. The purpose of Prop 8 was to formally establish the legal definition of marriage in California to be between one man and one woman. The homosexual lobby wasn't happy about that, and was fighting the initiative and referendum as hard as they could. Prop 8 passed, but was later struck down by both the California Supreme Court and a federal judge.

It was at the point of the loss of the Prop 8 vote that militant homosexual rights advocates hit upon a strategy to ensure that no one would challenge them ever again. They began to pore over the public records that listed all the contributors to all the organizations that were in favor of Prop 8 — the so-called "traditional marriage" supporters.

Vocal homosexual rights groups made the names public and began a campaign of harassment toward

those traditional marriage supporters who had contributed to the Prop 8 fight. The openly biased California news media were only too happy to go along.

Among the contributors on one of those lists was Brendan Eich, who had given a \$1,000 personal contribution to a group advocating for the enactment of Prop 8. Eich had never campaigned publicly against homosexual rights, and no record of Eich even speaking on the issue could be located. In addition, no allegation has ever been made that Eich mistreated any employee because of sexual orientation, and

Mozilla under his leadership strictly enforced the company's anti-discrimination policy.

However, all of that wasn't good enough for the homosexual rights bunch. When Eich was promoted to Mozilla CEO in March, the attacks began in earnest. Homosexual Mozilla employees started social media campaigns against him, and pro-homosexual organizations nationwide began urging their members to boycott the Firefox search engine.

Eich decided to do what any upstanding leader would do. He didn't want Mozilla and its employees to suffer on his account. He resigned for the good of the company he had led to prominence in its field. He took one for the team.

With the homosexual lobby hounding him wherever he goes, Eich's brilliant career is likely at an end. He's damaged goods now. What company would take a chance on him, and risk the ire of homosexual militants? All of this over a \$1,000 contribution.

Eich's saga should shake up Christians. His story could be our story in coming years as the homosexual rights movement targets others who would dare disagree with them. To these people, simply looking the other way or abiding by live-and-let-live is not good enough. They must have total capitulation from the people they perceive as enemies, and nothing less than complete and unquestioned acceptance of their agenda will suffice.

It's coming. It's coming to Mississippi. It's coming to Mississippi Baptists and our churches. It won't be long now. Are we ready?



EICH

Who are Millennials?

My son Jess Rainer and I recently spoke in Texas on the topic of the Millennials, America's largest generation of nearly 79 million persons. Because we co-authored a book entitled, *The Millennials*, we have had the opportunity to speak on the subject on many occasions.

We reminded this audience in Dallas of the birth dates of this generation, 1980-2000, and then proceeded to share our research. We had commissioned LifeWay Research to survey 1,200 of the older Millennials. The researchers did an outstanding job. We have thus been able to share incredible amounts of data and insights from these young adults.



Guest opinion

with Thom Rainer

congregants and worship leaders are going through the motions and they will reject such perfunctory attitudes altogether.

■ This large generation does want a quality worship service, but that quality must be paired with the authenticity noted above and stem from adequate preparation of the worship leaders both spiritually and in time of rehearsal. In that sense, quality worship services are possible for churches of all sizes.

Worship Style

As in most of our speaking settings, we allow a portion of our presentation to be a time of questions and answers and inevitably someone will ask us about the worship style preferences of the Millennials.

Typically the context of the question emanates from a background of nearly three decades of "worship wars." In other words, on what "side" are the Millennials? Are they traditional or contemporary? Are they somewhere on the nebulous spectrum of blended styles?

Though Jess and I did not originally ask those questions in our research, we have sufficient anecdotal evidence to respond, and our response is usually received with some surprise.

The direct answer is, none of the above.

What matters most

You see, most Millennials don't think in the old worship war paradigm. In that regard, style of worship is not their primary focus. Instead, they seek worship services and music that have three major elements:

■ Millennials desire the music to have rich content. They desire to sing those songs that reflect deep biblical and theological truths. It is no accident that the hymnody of Keith and Kristyn Getty has taken the Millennials by storm. Their music reflects those deep and rich theological truths.

■ Millennials desire authenticity in a worship service. They can sense when

Churches they attend

Millennial Christians, and a good number of seekers among their generation, are gravitating to churches where the teaching and preaching are given a high priority. They are attracted to churches whose focus is not only on the members, but on the community and the world. Inwardly focused congregations will not see many Millennials in their churches.

You will hear Millennials speak less and less about worship style. Their focus is on theologically rich music, authenticity, and quality that reflects adequate preparation in rehearsal and prayer.

They will walk away from congregations that are still fighting about style of music, hymnals, screen projections, choirs, or praise teams. Those are not essential issues to Millennials, and they don't desire to waste their time hearing Christians fight about such matters.

Thom Rainer is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, TN. This column first appeared on his website, www.ThomRainer.com, and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press.

THE BaptistRecord

Editor
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design
Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising
Emily Jones
ejones@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

Editor Emeritus
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Dwayne Parker, Flora Paul Sims, Pontotoc
Barry Burris, Terry Carl White, Meridian
Billie Buckley, Petal
Russell Mord, Sturgis

Postmaster:
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Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org



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Golden Gate reaches agreement for campus sale

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP and local reports) — Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., owned and operated by the Southern Baptist Convention, has reached a sale agreement for all its campus property in Mill Valley and initiated relocation of its primary campus to Southern California.

In a special gathering of faculty, students, and staff, seminary President Jeff Iorg announced the agreement with North Coast Land Holdings. The seminary's board of trustees approved the sale agreement unanimously. No dollar figures were released.

"The final sale agreement will result in resources for a new primary campus in Southern California, a new commuter campus in the Bay Area to continue to service this area, as well as a substantial addition to the seminary's endowment," Iorg reported.

'Unprecedented Opportunity'

"This is an unprecedented opportunity to build a new kind of seminary campus for education in the 21st century," Iorg said. "We are seizing the moment to focus on fulfilling our mission in bold, innovative new ways."

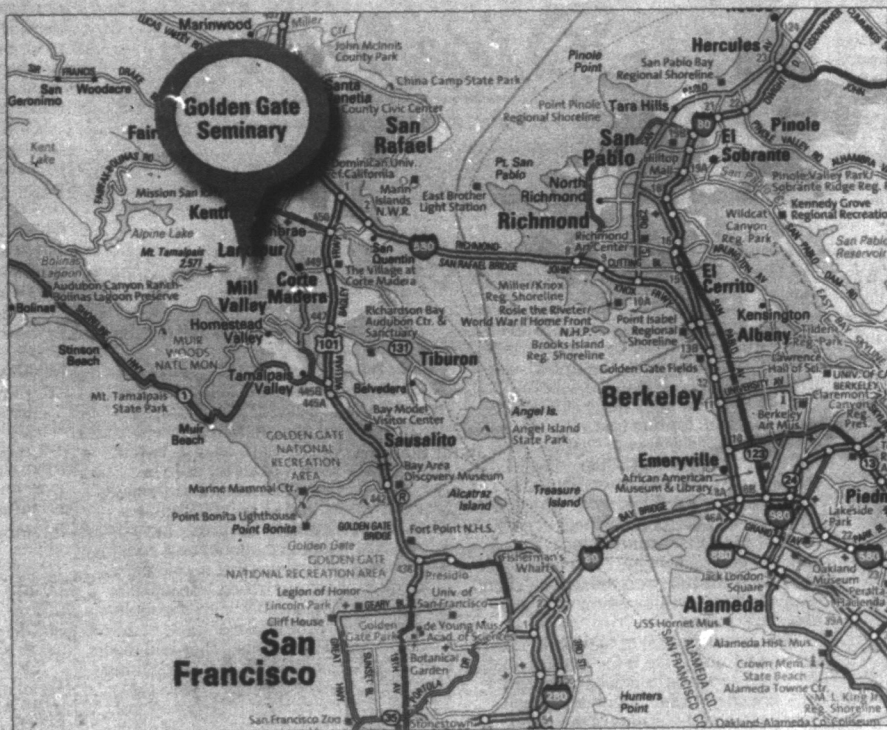
Steve Sheldon, chairman of the board of trustees, added, "The board has been fully engaged in land development decisions for years and is unified in the direction we have chosen for the future." Full details about the sale agreement will be announced after the sale is finalized.

Golden Gate Seminary has faced many land development challenges over the years. "For the past four years, we have been involved in a lengthy and difficult process trying to further develop the Mill Valley Campus property," Iorg said.

"We have engaged top planning firms, real estate specialists, financial analysts, legal counsel, and political consultants to help us with this process. Despite these skilled professionals — and much prayer — we have been stymied. Gradually, we have realized these difficulties are not obstacles to overcome, but rather signposts pointing us in a different direction."

Two more years

The terms of the sale agreement will enable the seminary to remain fully operational during the transition. The seminary will lease back the Mill Valley Campus property and continue present operations for at least two more academic years. After that, the seminary will operate a new commuter-style campus in the Bay Area, much like its current Southern California Campus.



"We are selling a campus, not closing our doors. We are relocating and repositioning for future success, not abandoning our vision. We are sacrificing short-term comfort for long-term fulfillment of our mission. We are positioning ourselves strategically, geographically and financially to impact the Western United States and the world like never before."

Jeff Iorg, Golden Gate Seminary president



Students

In making the announcement, Iorg singled out two groups of people who will be impacted the most by the decision: students and employees.

Iorg assured currently enrolled students at the Mill Valley Campus that their degree progress will not be interrupted for the next two years as the school has a lease-back agreement for the current campus. All student housing also will remain open during the next two years.

This agreement allows students enrolled at the Mill Valley Campus to complete their degrees before the seminary relocates to its two new campuses in Southern California and the Bay Area.

Iorg also said the seminary will work closely with those who cannot finish their degrees in the allotted time to assure degree completion.

"New students should also continue to come to Golden Gate," Iorg added. He underscored that the seminary will continue operations across its five-campus system and online programs during the transition.

"The seminary will be fully operational for the rest of this academic year, plus two additional academic years at its present location. Our school is open for business and will remain fully operational during the transition," Iorg said.

"We will maintain the academic programs and standards currently in place across our system. We will continue to offer degrees through both face-to-face and online instruction, as well as continue programs at regional campuses in other states."

Employees

Iorg thanked employees for their faithful service through the many challenges Golden Gate has faced in the past. "No matter our locations, we will still need God-called men and women to staff our programs and teach our classes," he said. "As soon as the sale is finalized, we will begin implementing our strategic plans for the future."

"We will work with employees to walk through these transitions together and develop the best team possible for the next season of our seminary's life."

Just as he told students, Iorg reminded employees, "The seminary will be open tomorrow and for two more years in its present locations. Come to work and do the same good job you have been doing."

Mission fulfillment

Iorg concluded his remarks by reminding the seminary community about the importance of being a mission-driven institution. "Today, you are part of one of the boldest moves by any seminary in the past century. We are selling a campus, not closing our doors. We are relocating and repositioning for future success, not abandoning our vision."

"We are sacrificing short-term comfort for long-term fulfillment of our mission. We are positioning ourselves strategically, geographically and financially to impact the Western United States and the world like never before. We will all pay a personal cost for fulfilling our mission and vision this way. It will, at times, be scary and unnerving."

"Nevertheless, as I have told you on countless occasions, 'The mission matters most.' Like perhaps no seminary in recent history, we are standing behind that declaration with our actions today," Iorg said.

Speaking even more personally, Iorg said, "In my heart of hearts, I believe these decisions are right. I have agonized over them and have come to believe this is God's path for us. I have made these decisions with many regrets but ultimately, no doubts. We are headed to the future and I hope you will join me on the journey."

So. Baptist seminaries

Golden Gate Seminary, founded in Oakland, Calif., in 1944, and moved to Mill Valley in 1959, is one of six seminaries owned and operated by the Southern Baptist Convention. The others are:

- Southern Seminary, founded in 1859 in Greenville, S.C., and moved to Louisville, Ky., in 1877.
- Southwestern Seminary, founded in 1908 on the campus of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and moved to Ft. Worth in 1910.

- New Orleans Seminary, founded in 1917 and currently situated on the site of a former peach orchard.

- Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., founded in 1950.

- Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., founded in 1957.

For more information on Golden Gate Seminary's announcement, visit ggbs.edu to find a list of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers and a video message from Iorg.

Leanne It to Beaver was a popular television show back in the '60s. Most of you reading this article probably remember watching it. For those of you who are not familiar with it, there was this young kid who every week seemed to be able to get into trouble and then to get out of it and move on in life, giving all of us a good lesson in decision making. The reruns continue on cable television until this day.

In one of the episodes, the Beaver and his dad went into the garage of their home. Beaver asked his dad, "What makes cans rust?" His dad, who always seemed to know the answers for everything said, "Because of oxidation." The Beaver's follow-up question was, "Well, why don't they make cans out of wood then?" The dad explained that wood rots. The Beaver with brilliant insight for a young kid said, "There seems to be something wrong with just about everything."

Without question, you can just about apply his analysis to everything in our world and especially in human relationships. Cans do rust, wood does rot and people are imperfect. The Bible says it so clearly in Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Just to take that one simple verse and understand what God has revealed to us gives us remarkable insight into every human relationship and every issue that we may face.

All have sinned. For most of us, the word sin would immediately bring forth ideas of wrong doing, meanness and sometimes despicable behavior. The word itself means to miss the mark or to take the wrong road. When you miss God's perfect mark for your life, you will immediately experience the consequences of wrong decision making, but it does not stop there.



Directions

With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

The Beaver Knows

The waves of our wrong doing will affect those around us, those we love and those we may not even know. We sinned, went in the wrong direction and disobeyed God.

To look at that even more closely is to come to the realization that while everyone of us has sinned, everyone that we know has sinned. This means that everyone that we know at some point or another will probably disappoint us. Everyone we know will be disappointed by us at some point. Now if that sounds depressing to you, you are exactly right. It is depressing because as the Beaver correctly said, "There seems to be something wrong with just about everything."

That certainly applies to people. The more you think about it the more dismal the world becomes because you have not only sinned one time but maybe dozens, hundreds, and thousands of times as you think a wrong thought in your mind, say the wrong thought with your lips, go the wrong direction with your life, and then exponentially begin to see how that affects

you in a multiplicity of ways and everybody you know.

My friend, here is the good news. Soon Easter will be here, and it is much more than just a story about a man who lived, died, and then arose from the dead. It is a story that envelops all of us in that God has made provisions for us to be forgiven of our brokenness, our rustiness, our rottenness, and all of our sinfulness. We can be forgiven by the great God who created us. Just think about Jesus hanging on the cross, taking our sins upon Himself and suffering for our wrong. He looked out across the panoramic view of people in front of Him and spoke of those who had just done Him wrong. They had made the wrong decision, done the wrong thing, and nailed Him to the cross. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

His words are not just Easter time words. They echo through life every day down every corridor of life as God says He will forgive us. Today you can be forgiven

and not for just one sin that may stand out, but you can be forgiven for all of your sins that have corrupted your life. But don't stop there! God Almighty not only provides forgiveness for us, He enables us to forgive. There is a glorious possibility in every one of us to experience in almost euphoric waves the forgiveness of God to the depths of our lives.

God then enables us to be forgiving to people who have done wrong, to people who have done us wrong, to people who have failed, sputtered, broken down, and gone miles down the wrong roads of life. We can forgive them. Have you ever known someone who could not forgive? Maybe a better question would be who would not forgive. By His power we can all be enabled to forgive even as He forgave us. When you are forgiven, it is a glorious experience. When you forgive that is also a glorious and incredible experience.

Maybe today you have been holding on to a grudge or a hurt that came because you were mistreated, abused, or betrayed. It can happen in so many ways. All of these people around us can disappoint us and go on their dumb, decision making ways of disobeying God and hurting others. You may have been caught in the crossfire. So what have you done about the hurt that has come to you? Will you forgive? Will you let it go? Will you allow God to minister to your life, to bless you and to bless others?

It is Easter, and while we are mindful of His amazing gift of forgiveness toward us, would you look at His amazing forgiveness that He may want to exhibit through you? You will be blessed if you do.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

OBITUARIES

E. Milton Wheeler, retired William Carey University (WCU) professor, died March 24 after an extended illness.

Wheeler devoted 55 years of his life to WCU, where he was a student and a professor. In addition to his role as professor of history, he served for seven years as dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, two years as vice president for student development, and five years as vice president for academic affairs.

He was named outstanding faculty member numerous times and served for 36 years as the faculty athletic representative for the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

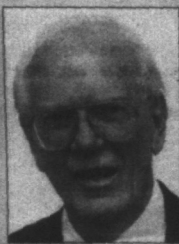
Wheeler was born in Mobile, Al., on July 23, 1939, and graduated from Vigor High School before beginning his studies at then-William Carey College. While a student at Carey, he was editor of The Cobbler student newspaper and won a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship to attend graduate school. Upon his graduation with summa cum laude honors from Carey in 1961, he enrolled at Tulane University where he earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees.

Wheeler and his wife, the late Donna Duck Wheeler, donated approximately \$2.3 million to the university they both served for five decades.

Wheeler was a longtime member of First Church, Hattiesburg, where he was a deacon and Sunday school teacher. Dr. Wheeler was also the teacher on Living Waters, the longest-running local television program, for 27 years.

Funeral service was held March 30 in Smith

Auditorium of the Thomas Fine Arts Center, on the WCU campus in Hattiesburg. WCU President Tommy King officiated.



WHEELER



QUICK

Van Dyke "Doc" Quick, 81, of Clinton, longtime Mississippi College administrator, died March 28 at Hospice Ministries in Ridgeland. Born March 26, 1933 in Dentville to H.T. and Mary Quick, Doc graduated from Hazlehurst High School and attended Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton as a freshman in 1951. He graduated from MC in 1955. He married Shelly Smyly in June of that year. After graduation he attended New Orleans Seminary where he received a Masters of Divinity in 1958. He became youth minister at Bellevue Church, Memphis. While in Memphis he and his wife had a set of twins, Sharon Lee and Karon Lynn. In 1960, he was called to MC as the director of the student center. He remained at MC until he retired in 1999 as vice president of student personnel. Doc received his doctorate from Mississippi State University in Starkville. He was chaplain in the United States Army Reserves, where he retired as a colonel. Doc was also a member of the Mississippi High School Athletic Association as a high school football coach. Doc is survived

by his wife, Shelly; two daughters, Sharon Wilson (Jim) and Karon McMillan (Dale); three grandchildren; and one great grandchild. Doc is preceded in death by his parents, H.T. and Mary Quick. Funeral was held April 1 at First Church, Clinton.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

XJU BRNMN XJNARIZJO NXZU MJCD
CERQ, CERH CEXC XIR AEDGR JRRU
JDC X LEHNZVZXJ; WMC CERH CEXC
XIR NZVF.

GMFR KZSR: CEZICH-DJR

Clue: Z = I

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 8:24

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Fax 601-924-2880

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DOING MORE TOGETHER IN MISSISSIPPI AND AROUND THE WORLD



RICK BLYTHE
Director, Stewardship/
Cooperative Program
Promotion

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board operates with the goal and motto of "Helping to bring Mississippi and the World to Jesus." The missionary enterprise of leading people to Jesus is the heartbeat of Mississippi Baptists and the primary means of funding this endeavor is through the Cooperative Program.

Personally, I have been the recipient of Cooperative Program giving; first as a student and graduate of Blue Mountain College and later as a student and graduate of one of our Southern Baptist seminaries. I have witnessed the dollars given through the Cooperative Program at work in a multiplicity of ways - Disaster Relief, Camp Garaywa and Central Hills Baptist Retreat. In addition, think about the impact your Cooperative Program giving has on the lives of boys and girls who receive ministry through the Baptist Children's Village. Over 200 Christian vocational students in our three colleges across the state receive ministerial scholarships funded through the Cooperative Program and will become our church leaders of the future. Missionary Mobilization, Associational Missions, and Collegiate Ministry all represent exciting ways Mississippi Baptists are reaching out to our neighbors of whom 1.8 million or more are still unreached. The Cooperative Program helps fund the ministry of the Christian Action Commission, WMU and Men's Ministry, the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, and Church Planting and Revitalization. Church growth ministries such as Discipleship and Family Ministry, Evangelism, Sunday School, Church Music, and Stewardship rely on Cooperative Program giving to come along-side the 2,100+ churches in Mississippi and strengthen them in each of these crucial areas.



The world-wide impact of our giving through the Cooperative Program is nothing short of astounding. Consider this; in North American Mission Support, Mississippi Baptists and our Southern Baptist partners plant churches, assist in disaster relief, and offer compassionate ministry evangelism in all 50 states and Canada. Internationally, our Cooperative Program giving assists in training and sending over 4,800 missionaries and last year 114,571 overseas baptisms were reported by the missionaries. Cooperative Program giving provides financial support for more than 10,000 missionaries in North America and around the world. Did you know that our gifts through the Cooperative Program

also benefit each one of our six Southern Baptist seminaries who are responsible for training one out of every six ministers in the world?

We all know that God's purposes are bigger than what we can accomplish individually. Many years ago Baptist leader Albert McClellan said, "Cooperation is essential, and it is clear that churches that work together are able to accomplish more than churches that

work alone. An isolated independent church may take a neighborhood for Christ, but only a community of related independent churches can take a city for Christ." Mississippi Baptists are a part of the Southern Baptist family but more importantly we are a part of God's Family. As the forever children of God, let's give together through the Cooperative Program in helping to bring Mississippi and the World to Jesus!

Because HE Lives,
Rick Blythe
Director, Stewardship/Cooperative Program Promotion

2012-13 Cooperative Program Century Club Giving

Century Club churches are selected based on two criteria: Total church offerings and Cooperative Program Gifts. The ten largest Cooperative Program supporters in each offering category are listed on the following pages. *Offering data is drawn from the Annual Church Profile and the Cooperative Program data comes from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Financial Services Department. Thank you for your gifts to the Cooperative Program.

(* These numbers reflect ACP data from Oct. 2012 through Sept. 2013)

CENTURY CLUB

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY Below \$25,000

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
MONTGOMERY/MISSION	2,595.30
LEAKE/NEW PROVIDENCE	2,482.07
MISSISSIPPI/EBENEZER	2,282.28
NORTH CENTRAL/TEMPLE	1,889.03
KEMPER/BLUFF SPRINGS	1,753.26
MID-DELTA/MT VERNON	1,751.92
CLARKE/PLEASANT GROVE	1,613.28
ALCORN/JACINTO	1,515.59
MARSHALL/CAYCE	1,484.59
GEORGE-GREENE/AVERA	1,407.06

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 25,000 - \$39,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
UNION CO/MYRTLE	5,933.76
LEBANON/HATTIESBURG CHINESE	4,812.00
JACKSON/MAGNOLIA	4,112.42
TISHOMINGO/UNITY	4,024.49
MARSHALL/CALVARY	4,022.89
GOLDEN TRIANGLE/WAKE FOREST	3,756.00
PANOLA/PHARSALIA	3,724.23
METRO/CAMDEN	3,645.72
WEBSTER/MT VERNON	3,555.80
ITAWAMBA/PROVIDENCE	3,548.00

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 40,000 - \$54,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
UNION CO/CORNERSVILLE	7,852.00
MID-DELTA/UNION	7,617.67
WEBSTER/NEW HOPE	6,035.00
UNION/FAYETTE	5,720.16
CALHOUN/COLLEGE HILL	5,704.00
JASPER/MONTROSE	4,944.54
BENTON-TIPPAH/PROVIDENCE	4,935.32
NESHOBA/NORTH CALVARY	4,921.70
ALCORN/HINKLE	4,917.89
LAUDERDALE/CENTER GROVE	4,789.00

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 55,000 - \$74,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
NORTH DELTA/FBC MARKS	11,525.33
MARION/SANDY HOOK	10,159.19
WALTHALL/UNION	9,863.00
CALHOUN/OLDTOWN	8,680.96
CHOCTAW/HOPEWELL	8,676.00
WINSTON/ENON	8,002.17
SHARKEY-ISSAQ/DEER CREEK	7,956.32
GEORGE-GREENE/NEELY	7,772.00
NORTH CENTRAL/GORE SPRINGS	7,596.53
ALCORN/TISHOMINGO CHAPEL	7,465.85

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 75,000 - \$99,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
CALHOUN/SABOUGLA	15,204.33
YAZOO/CONCORD	14,423.00
NEWTON/MT VERNON	12,977.28
YAZOO/OAK GROVE	12,307.21
MISSISSIPPI/CROSBY	12,100.00
HUMPHREYS/BEULAH	11,440.66
LAMAR/ORAL	11,104.31
PONTOTOC/LIBERTY	11,011.08
CHOCTAW/WEIR	10,537.12
CARROLL/LIBERTY	9,876.57

THANK

YOU

FOR

YOUR

GIFTS

TH



MISSIONS

More than 12,000 Mississippi Baptists participated in short-term missions last year. Two teams with a total of 17 volunteers traveled to Malaysia to help construct a longhouse and a church.

DISASTER RELIEF

In February of 2013, a major tornado hit Hattiesburg. A chainsaw team and a state feeding team responded. Over 10,000 meals were served. Several other small in-state disasters were handled by church and associational teams.



THROUGH

THE

COOPERATIVE

PROGRAM



CENTRAL HILLS/ GARAYWA

GARAYWA: 1314 Summer campers, with 15 professions of faith, 2 rededications and 4 felt a call to missions in 2013.
CENTRAL HILLS: 2563 Summer campers, with a total of 390 decisions made.



CHURCH PLANTING

CP funds trained 12-15 potential church planters in 2013

CENTURY CLUB

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 100,000 - \$149,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
MONTGOMERY/BETHSAIDA	26,300.56
MID-DELTA/SKENE	24,777.50
CALHOUN/PLEASANT HILL	20,649.98
SHARKEY-ISSAO/VALLEY PARK	18,441.64
GOLDEN TRIANGLE/DOUBLE SPRINGS	16,030.43
SMITH/LEAF RIVER	15,471.75
SCOTT/BANCH	14,907.84
BENTON-TIPPAH/LOWREY MEMORIAL	14,571.91
CLARKE/SHUBUTA	14,444.90
METRO/MIDWAY	14,354.93

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 150,000 - \$249,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
LINCOLN/NEW PROSPECT	43,651.82
RANKIN/PUCKETT	34,266.05
NEWTON/CHUNKY	33,589.69
ADAMS/CLIFF TEMPLE	33,029.59
RANKIN/CATO	32,112.87
TISHOMINGO/TISHOMINGO	31,749.82
LEBANON/SUNRISE	30,626.00
MARSHALL/FBC POTTS CAMP	29,224.82
PIKE/TERRY'S CREEK	28,380.29
HUMPHREYS/EASTSIDE	26,986.89

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 250,000 - \$499,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
GEORGE-GREENE/BARTON	59,021.68
PIKE/CENTRAL	57,249.70
LINCOLN/PLEASANT GROVE	55,618.37
COV-JEFF DAVIS/WHITESAND	54,975.97
LAUDERDALE/WESTWOOD	52,468.72
PIKE/WEST MCCOMB	51,487.57
MARSHALL/SLAYDEN	50,277.46
METRO/POCAHONTAS	49,316.48
SCOTT/SPRINGFIELD	49,313.19
LEE/PARKWAY	47,886.99

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 500,000 - \$999,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
MONTGOMERY/FBC WINONA	174,630.88
CHICKASAW/FBC HOUSTON	115,066.95
LAUDERDALE/FBC COLLINSVILLE	112,686.48
BENTON-TIPPAH/FBC RIPLEY	106,423.84
MONROE/MEADOWWOOD	105,818.68
MARION/BUNKER HILL	101,764.53
NEWTON/FBC NEWTON	101,499.38
JONES/INDIAN SPRINGS	100,150.70
ALCORN/WHEELER GROVE	92,397.32
LINCOLN/MACEDONIA	92,290.27

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$1,000,000 and UP

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
METRO/FBC JACKSON	822,395.54
METRO/BROADMOOR	559,703.02
LEE/HARRISBURG	434,358.75
METRO/MORRISON HEIGHTS	413,448.00
GOLDEN TRIANGLE/FAIRVIEW	369,067.60
METRO/FBC MADISON	368,017.36
RANKIN/FBC BRANDON	363,931.00
METRO/COLONIAL HEIGHTS	315,821.76
LAFAYETTE/FBC OXFORD	300,502.03
NORTH CENTRAL/EMMANUEL	291,669.18

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION BOARD 2014 COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET

	2014 Budget	% of Total
Global Missions/SBC		
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission	189,096	0.598%
International Mission Board	5,778,501	18.274%
North American Mission Board	2,612,247	8.261%
SBC Operating	342,776	1.084%
Theological Education	2,540,150	8.033%
Total	11,462,770	36.25%

Christian Education		
Christian Education	5,345,422	16.90%
Christian Education Capital Needs	678,507	2.15%
Board of Ministerial Education	348,916	1.10%
Total	6,372,845	20.15%

Church Growth Ministries		
Discipleship & Family Ministry	515,763	2.58%
Capital Needs	588,438	1.86%
Sunday School	402,906	1.27%
Church Music	397,214	1.26%
Church Growth	391,054	1.24%
Synergized Relationships / Teams	60,500	0.19%
Pastor/Leadership Development	331,233	1.05%
Evangelism	319,713	1.01%
Church-Minister Relations	229,328	0.73%
Total	3,536,149	11.19%

State Benevolent Institutions		
Church Retirement and Protection	850,000	2.69%
Baptist Children's Village	612,403	1.94%
Mississippi Baptist Foundation	397,703	1.26%
Christian Action Commission	355,308	1.12%
Historical Commission	67,940	0.21%
Mississippi Baptist Health Systems	9,340	0.03%
Total	2,292,694	7.25%

Executive Leadership & Communication		
Business Services	364,413	1.15%
Financial Services	445,574	1.41%
Baptist Record	560,483	1.77%
Executive Administration	518,298	1.64%
Communication Services	452,449	1.43%
Computer Information Services	331,975	1.05%
Convention & Convention Committees	108,550	0.34%
Total	2,779,742	8.79%

State Missions		
Collegiate Ministry	2,154,098	6.81%
Woman's Missionary Union	764,112	2.42%
Men's Ministry	618,560	1.96%
Missions Mobilization	554,079	1.75%
Mission Strategy	309,210	0.98%
Church Planting & Revitalization	396,294	1.25%
Stewardship	263,510	0.83%
Associational Missions	117,372	0.37%
Total	5,177,235	16.37%

Total CP Budget	31,621,435	100.00%
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COLLEGIATE MINISTRY

There were 129 BSU summer missionaries from Mississippi last year. 150 students will be commissioned for the summer of 2014.

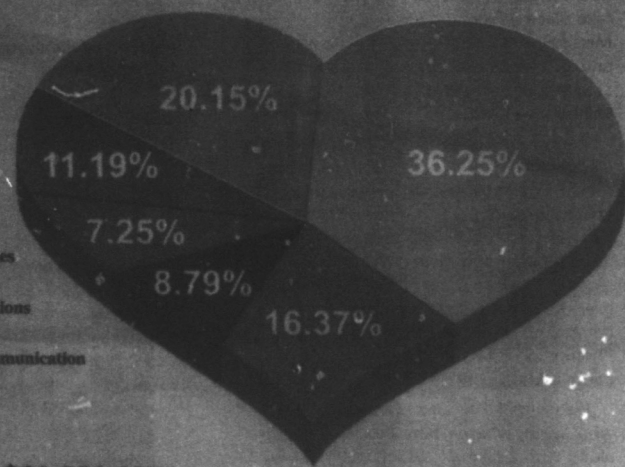
2014

COOPERATIVE

PROGRAM

BUDGET

Global Missions/SBC	\$11,462,770
Christian Education	\$6,372,845
Church Growth Ministries	\$3,536,149
State Benevolent Institutions	\$2,292,694
Exec. Leadership & Communication	\$2,779,742
State Missions	\$5,177,235



Total CP Budget: \$31,621,435

Just for the Record



The Brotherhood of **SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB**, built a ramp for one of its church members in January.



The youth group of **NESHOBA CHURCH, UNION**, participated in a World Changers project in Moss Point Mar. 9-12. Three adults and 21 youth served.

In other Church News:

> **Winston Association** is offering a church safety seminar May 17, 8:30 a.m. at South Louisville Church. Free. All churches and associations are urged to attend.

> **Riverside Church, Money**, is presenting a Love Out Loud program for the area May 17 at the pavilion across from the Holcomb Community Center, Holcomb.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Bible Drills



CENTRAL CHURCH, MCNEILL held its drills Apr. 2. Shown are the church's Bible Buddies, children, and youth.



MCLAURIN HEIGHTS CHURCH, PEARL, held its church drill Mar. 30. There were 37 participants - 13 children and 24 youth.



NEW HEIGHTS CHURCH, SUMMIT, recognizes its children and student drillers headed to the state drills.



SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB, recognizes its Bible drillers. Gail Hall leader; shown are Mary Grace McElveen, Katelynn Blackwell, and Will McElveen.

CHALLENGE

cont. from p. 1

Jackson has been pastor of McLaurin Heights for 21 years. He emphasizes there should be a plan in place of what to do with any excess monies due to the faithfulness of the church's people.

"We choose to support the Cooperative Program," Jackson said. "It's not a burden that we have to fulfill. It's a choice we gladly make."

When Jackson was president of the convention board, he served on the state budget committee. He saw that the MBCB developed a Challenge Budget, and he presented the same concept to the church. "If we have a good year, other people can be blessed," he said.

"In 2010 we began our Challenge Budget," Jackson continued. "We voted on it at the same time we voted on our regular budget. At the end of 2009, we voted on the 2010 budget. We

started the year with a certain amount — in our case, it was \$20,000 — and at the end of the year we take all the undesignated funds from the budget. We put \$20,000 back in the general fund on December 31, and any monies that are left over go into the Challenge Budget. The church has already voted the year before how that is to be spent. This past year was the best we've ever had. We had almost \$21,000 go into that Challenge Budget."

Because of this, the church was able to give a "13th" check to the Cooperative Program, giving the church the opportunity to be part of a team with a global impact. This year, the check was \$12,809.39. A third of the Challenge Budget went toward the church's budget escrow account, which is intended to equal one month's operating funds.

Jackson encourages other churches to do something similar.

"Churches are not in the savings business," Jackson said. "All churches should have a re-

serve, a rainy day fund. That's good stewardship — that way, if an air conditioner goes out, you don't have to immediately borrow money to cover it. The church should be mission minded enough to put feet to the words, and part of that is with money. This is just another way we can be mission minded. If you vote on how to use the money a year in advance, it keeps emotions from ruling the day. That way, someone won't say, 'Hey, we have an extra \$10,000. Let's spend it on this.'"

For McLaurin Heights, their Challenge Budget gives them the opportunity to support their "own" missionaries as well as missionaries supported by CP funds. The Rankin Association also receives funds on a percentage basis. "We think this fulfills the idea of proportionate giving from 1 Corinthians 16:1 — 2," said Jackson. "Since we started the Challenge Budget, we've met and gone over our budget every time."

Jackson notes that any church

of any size can do this, because it is based on a percentage of giving. "It's a visible commitment that anyone in the church can see — that we're committed to missions. We just believe that the best avenue to do missions is through the Cooperative

Program. Remember we help individual missionaries, so for us it's not an 'either/or.' It's a 'both/and,' and we like doing a both/and. Remember we have all these missionaries who have given their lives to missions, and they need to be supported."

CLASSIFIEDS

ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONARY: Clarke County Baptist Association, AL accepting resumes for Associational Missionary/DOM through April 30th. Resumes may be submitted to: 16183 Hwy 43, Grove Hill, AL 36451 or cbamoffice@gmail.com

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FOLEY, ALABAMA IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE FULL-TIME POSITION OF MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. Please email resumes to scollins@fbcfoley.com.

FOR SALE: 84 ROYAL BLUE CHOIR ROBES IN ALL SIZES WITH STOLLS. \$40 per robe or \$30 per robe if you buy all. Contact: Macedonia Baptist Church. 601-833-6780

FOR SALE: TWO 32-CHANNEL GBS SOUNDTRACK CONSOLES IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. Used indoors only in Sound/TV ministries and have never travelled. \$3650 each or \$7000 for pair. Contact (662) 842-3338 or email dsprins@calvarytupelo.com.

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS: GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH, AL. Rent direct from Christian Family Owners. Lowest Prices on the Beach. www.gulfshorescondos.com, 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231, 251-752-2368.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRIES NEEDS VAN OR MINI-BUS, 12 passenger. Call 601-270-5008

GET THE BEST RATES ON: Health Insurance and Medicare Supplements. Call 1-800-541-8198 or visit www.TurnerInsuranceOnline.com

STAINED GLASSWORKS, INC., serving MS & AL since 1992. Call 800-605-2970

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GATLINBURG RENTALS: Cabin \$95/night and Condo \$75/night. Contact: 832 922 0401 or E-mail: pdw4760@att.net for information and booking.

HEIDELBERG STAINED GLASS, MERIDIAN, DESIGN, FABRICATION, REPAIR. heidelbergstainedglass.com or call 800-368-2705.

CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, FREE ESTIMATES. Davis Upholstery, Oultman, Miss., phone 601-776-8617.

STAINED GLASS: new windows and repairs. Hopper Stained Glass, Jackson, 601-502-0202.

SEBREN'S SIDING www.sebrenhomeimprovement.com. Christian owned Don & Rita Sebre. 601-992-2092. All home improvements, siding, energy efficient windows, metal & shingle roofs, screen & sunrooms, patio covers, decks, room additions, kitchen & bath upgrades.

MS POSITIONS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VERONA, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please mail resumes in care of Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 1093, Verona MS 38879.

NEW SIGHT BAPTIST CHURCH IN BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR/PREACHER. Please send resume to: New Sight Baptist Church, 629 Forest Tr, Brookhaven, Ms 39601 or email to mmax80@hotmail.com or fax resume to 601-857-7791.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN KOSCIUSKO, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME FAMILY/CHILDREN'S MINISTER. Please send resume to First Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 70, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

AUBURN BAPTIST CHURCH IN TUPELO, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEARCHING FOR A YOUTH PASTOR TO LEAD OUR STUDENT MINISTRIES. Please send resume's to: 1138 City Rd. 931, Tupelo, MS 38804. Attn: Youth Pastor Search Committee. You can email jhenry@auburnbaptistchurch.org with resume's or questions.

BETHSAIDA BAPTIST CHURCH IN FRENCH CAMP IS SEEKING A PIANO PLAYER/CHOIR DIRECTOR. THIS IS A PART TIME POSITION. Interested people should contact Tony Thomas at 662-547-6616 or Pastor Alex Lawson at 662-674-0366. Email inquiries can email alawson233@wildblue.net.

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Spiritual
Treasures

"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...
For where your treasure is there your heart will be also."
Matthew 6:20-21

Celebrating Faith and Healing
in the Mid-South

You are invited to join us for our faith-oriented
speaker series at Baptist Memorial Health Care.

Reverend Shane Stanford

Senior Minister of Christ United Methodist Church

Thursday, April 17, 2014

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Dr. H. Edward Garrett, Sr. Auditorium
6027 Walnut Grove Road

 **BAPTIST**

To RSVP, please visit baptistonline.org
or call 901.227.7123

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God
in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Forge Godly Friendships • Proverbs 22:24-25; 17:14, 19; 26:21; 25:19; 13:20; 14:17, 22, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 3:3-4; 16:6; 20:6; 10:12; 11:17; 15:17; 17:17; 18:24; 27:9

Our lesson from Proverbs this week seeks to show us how to build Godly friendships in our lives. We are all familiar with the quotation from a poem by John Donne: "No man is an island." The truth is that this quotation captures a truth that is at the very heart of who we are. God created us to be relational or to have relationships in our lives. He created Adam and knew he needed Eve to fulfill this need for relationships in life. We all need friends in our lives. Through these relationships we are encouraged, motivated, and influenced to do good things or bad things with our lives. Proverbs teaches us that God expects us to forge Godly relationships in our lives that will encourage, motivate, and influence us to do good things for Him. The wisdom to forge those kinds of relationships is highlighted in the book of Proverbs and many other passages in the Bible. Proverbs also reminds us that there can be friction in even the best relationships, and we must learn to deal with it in a Godly manner.

Consider Consequences

(22:24-25; 17:14, 19; 26:21; 25:19; 13:20; 14:22)

We have all heard the phrase, "If you want good friends, you must be a good friend." To be a good friend we must al-

ways consider the consequences of our behavior among our friends. The way we act can cause problems in our relationships or can strengthen those relationships. The thing we must always consider is what kind of influence we are having on our friends and what kind of influence they are having on us. The person who desires to live a life of Godly wisdom will consider the consequences of his behavior and whether it is moving people toward God or away from Him. The mission of the believer is the same as the mission of Jesus, and that is to "seek and save the lost." While we know that Jesus is the one who saves, it is our job to always point people to Him.



Explore the Bible

with Huey Dedmon

Cultivate Patience

(14:17, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11)

All of us have lost our patience with someone or we have witnessed someone else having the same experience. We live in such a fast paced world that it is hard

not to lose our patience in many situations. The other day I went by the car wash to rid my truck of the coat of pollen that had fallen on it. I put my money in and instantly I was drenched from the waist down by a busted hose on the cleaning wand. I threw the wand to the ground and yelled, "Why can't people keep their equipment in good working order?" As my voice rebounded off the wash bay walls, I realized I was

standing right next to an outdoor eating establishment. I looked over to see if anyone was looking at me, because

if they were, they had heard me. I am a Christian and am known by many in my community. In one act of anger and frustration I had possibly damaged my witness in our community. Proverbs reminds us to cultivate patience in our relationships. Our moments of lost patience can permanently ruin our chance to be a witness to friends and family. We can build and cultivate Godly friendships and re-

lationships when we practice patience in those relationships.

Communicate Loyalty and Love

(3:3-4; 16:6; 20:6; 10:12; 11:17; 15:17; 17:17; 18:24; 27:9)

Anytime we have a discussion about friendships, the importance of being a loving, loyal friend rises quickly to the surface. When these two aspects of a relationship are weakened or destroyed, the relationship is weakened or destroyed. To be a true friend we must make it a priority to communicate our love toward our friends. We do that through our actions, body language and speech. Loyalty is expressed in much the same manner, but for me carries the idea that we are there with them during a time of need. Proverbs 17:17 says, "A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for a difficult time." (HCSB) When we demonstrate love and loyalty to our friends, we are forging strong relationships with them and we are demonstrating Godly wisdom through our lives. Remember also that even when our earthly relationships fail, we have a friend who sticks closer than a brother! (18:24)

Dedmon is Associate Pastor for Education and Outreach, Brandon Church, Brandon.

Hope Needed • 2 Samuel 9:6-13

HOPE: how do you define it? As a daily-stumbling, cross-carrying child of God, I choose to describe it this way: (H)eaven (O)ffers (P)ardon (f)or (E)veryone. Now that is good news! Who doesn't need hope today? The pure and true gospel declares that in Heaven on Earth, "hope" is a five letter word: J-E-S-U-S. Our illustration of hope comes from the Old Testament, tracking the footprints of forgiveness and grace available in the Messiah Who would be born through the line of King David of the tribe of Judah.

Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel. The disobedience of Saul brought his reign to a screeching halt. Samuel would anoint David, son of Jesse of Bethlehem, to replace Saul. Jonathan, the son of Saul, was the friend of David. Their friendship was based on covenant promises David and Jonathan made to each other in the presence of God. In 1 Samuel 20:42, they pledged, "The Lord will be between me and you and between my descendants and your descendants forever." Such oaths were binding to the death. These self-chosen brothers invested their hope in the covenant-making, covenant-keeping God.

During a battle against the Philistines, Jonathan and the other sons of Saul were killed. Saul was gravely wounded. He ended his own life by falling on his own

sword. The book of First Samuel ends with the death of Saul. As Second Samuel opens, David is confirmed king by the tribe of Judah and later by the whole nation of Israel. Jonathan had realized David was to become king in the place of his father. Their covenant assured that the descendants of Jonathan would be under the favored protection of King David.

2 Samuel 4:4 reveals that Jonathan had a young son named Mephibosheth. On the

day of the death of his father, Mephibosheth was five years old. As Saul's kingdom fell completely apart, his surviving descendants were obviously in danger. The boy was taken into hiding immediately by a nurse charged with his safe-keeping. In her haste to flee, the boy fell, rendered permanently lame in both his feet. When we meet him again in 2 Samuel 9, several years have passed. Mephibosheth now has a young son of his own named Micah. Now fully established as king, David determines to honor his covenant with

Jonathan and the house of Saul with a search-and-rescue mission to care for any surviving family members. Ziba, a former servant of King Saul, helps King David locate Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth had every reason to live without hope. The grandson of former King Saul and the son of the heir apparent, Jonathan, was now an orphan. As a child, he could run and play with joyful abandon. Now as a crippled adult, he must

have felt completely abandoned. Once he lived in a palace compound and ate at the table of the king. Now

he lived in Lodebar, the city called "no pastureland." Worst of all, after spending several years in hiding, he was being summoned to appear before King David. Surely his fate was sealed: now he would be eliminated. Certainly, he concluded that his life mirrored the meaning of the second half of his name: SHAME/HUMILIATION.

Mephibosheth is carried into the pres-

ence of the King. Immediately, he falls on his face in humility laced with sheer terror. David calls him by name. He responds, "Here is your servant!" Instead of the expected death sentence, Mephibosheth hears David telling him not to be afraid. Instead of the brutal commands of a warrior king, in disbelief, he hears words of kindness and restoration. Instead of banishment from the kingdom, he hears the beloved names of his father and his grandfather spoken with tenderness. Instead of being kicked out on the street to crawl around on the ground looking for crumbs to survive, Mephibosheth receives a family land grant and a lifetime invitation to dine at the table of the King. The first half of his name meant: TO DISPEL.

We would need many more pages to describe the nuances of the beauty of hope found in this story. Mephibosheth needed hope. The naming of his son, Micah, testifies that his ultimate hope was in the Lord. "Micah" means "Who is like Yahweh?" Years of living in helpless hopelessness dissolved into mercy and grace. Mephibosheth saw himself as a worthless piece of garbage. The Covenant King Who anointed and established King David declared him HOPE-FILLED.

Brown is staff evangelist at First Church, Richland

Bible Studies for Life

with Becky Brown



Revivals & Homecomings

► **Ramah Church, McCall** after services; Ted Bowlin, speaker; Lennie Case, pastor.
► **Ethel Church, Ethel:** Re-

vival, Apr. 13 - 16; Sun., 11 a.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Steve Stone, speaker; Chris and Karen Ray, music.

► **First Church, Morton:** Revival, Apr. 13 - 16; Sun.,

11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Carl Duck, former pastor, speaker.

► **Goodwater Church, Meehan:** 150th anniversary,

May 4; celebration, 9 a.m., with fellowship, history, and pictures; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds.

Appeals court: churches can't meet in NYC public schools

NEW YORK CITY (BP) — Dozens of churches stand to lose their meeting places in New York City public schools after another unfavorable court ruling.

The U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York City on April 3 again upheld a policy that bars worship services in the city's schools, saying the rule does not violate the First Amendment protection of religious liberty.

The case is *Bronx Household of Faith v. Board of Education of the City of New York*.

The latest opinion in a nearly 20-year court case enables, though it does not require, the city's Board of Education to evict possibly as many as 80 congregations that use school facilities for corporate worship.

Bronx Household of Faith, the church involved in the lawsuit, is considering whether to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, or beyond the three-judge panel that made the decision to the full appeals court, its lawyer said.

"The court system's capricious and bizarre mistreatment of churches is an atrocity," said Russell D. Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville. "Church plants, operating within the rules and doing nothing to disrupt others, have been tossed about by the courts on the question simply of whether they can rent facilities in which to worship."

Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga., said in a written statement, "This decision will have a nega-

tive impact on all faith groups that often make use of public spaces. These groups pay to rent the space. We are not asking anything for free."

"I believe the Second Circuit Court of Appeals and New York City government officials have made a poor decision that ultimately conflicts with the U.S. Constitution and will be overturned. In the meantime, we will do everything we can to be sure New York City residents will be able to worship freely near their homes."

NAMB has no record of Southern Baptist churches now meeting in New York City schools, but seven reportedly were using city school facilities as recently as 2012. About 80 congregations regularly use school buildings for worship services, according to a court filing by the city in 2012, *The New York Times* reported.

The Board of Education's policy prohibits "religious worship services" or using a school building as a "house of worship" outside normal hours, even though it permits individuals and other organizations to use the facilities for activities.

However, the rule allows religious groups to use schools "for prayer, singing hymns, religious instruction, expression of religious devotion, or the discussion of issues from a religious point of view," according to the Second Circuit Court.

In a 2-1 decision, the Second Circuit panel ruled the policy infringed upon neither of the First Amendment's religion clauses — the right to exercise religion freely and the ban on government establishment of religion.

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MISSISSIPPI WMU SEEKING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-TREASURER

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES

The Executive Director-Treasurer of Woman's Missionary Union is responsible for promoting, planning, conducting and evaluating the missions mobilization, missions awareness, missions education, missions support and missions involvement among women, youth, girls, preschoolers and co-ed groups in Mississippi Baptist churches and associations throughout the state.

SPECIFICATIONS

Education: College: 4 years; Seminary: 2 to 3 years
Experience: Church/Denomination: 5 to 10 years

RESUMES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:

WMU Search Committee, Marion D. Duncan, Chairman,
277 Cambridge Drive, Starkville, MS 39759

RESUMES WILL BE RECEIVED UNTIL APRIL 30, 2014